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Effects of Chinese Education Style and Self-esteem in Adolescents' Fashion Innovativeness and Conspicuous Consumption in Young Adults: A longitudinal study in Taiwan

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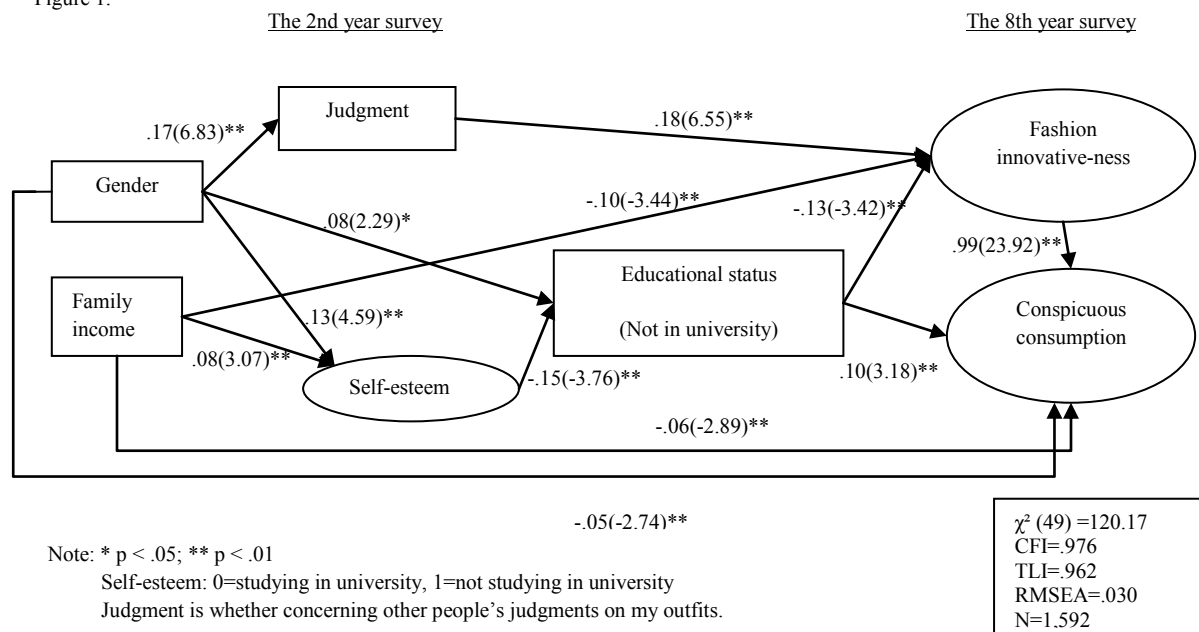
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Keywords: Chinese culture, education, fashion innovativeness, and conspicuous consumption

Introduction. With globalization and economic growth of Asian countries, many Western brands have attempted to better understand Asian consumers, and Chinese consumers in particular. Owing to globalization influence of Western media and economic growth, Chinese societies are in transition from non-consumerism to consumerism societies, where consumers are becoming more innovative and brand conscious than in past decades (Podoshen, Li, & Zhang, 2011). Among these Chinese consumers, college students are seen the main group of possession consumption attitudes (Roberts, 2000). However, self-esteem derived from the Chinese culture of the in-group relationship and the education of cram style have a great impact on students innovativeness and conspicuous consumption (Chien & Hui, 2010). However, no research has examined the impact of education and self-esteem on fashion innovativeness and conspicuous consumption. The purpose of the present study was to investigate how education and self-esteem impact fashion innovativeness and conspicuous consumption among Chinese college students in the life course (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Method. Data for the present study were drawn from the Taiwan Youth Project (TYP), conducted by the Institute of Sociology, Academic Sinica, Taiwan. The TYP is a ten-year

research project that began in 2000 and included two student cohorts, first-year junior high school students (J1) and third-year junior high school students (J3). These two cohorts were surveyed annually for 10 consecutive years. The present study employed the J1 cohort, and all information about the variables used in the subsequent analyses emerged from the students' self-report surveys. After deleting missing cases on, there were 1,592 subjects.

Results. Confirmatory factor analysis in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to form factors based on these criteria: eigenvalues ≥ 1 , and factor loadings above .50 on a factor but below .30 on other factors. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with grouping analysis was used to estimate the model shown in Figure 1. The SEM structural model had a fairly good fit (see Figure 1 for fit indices). Gender is associated with judgments, education, self-esteem, and conspicuous consumption. Family income was related to fashion innovativeness, self-esteem, and conspicuous consumption. Junior high school students with a higher level of self-esteem were associated with studying in a university, but they had less fashion innovativeness than non-attending college students. However, college students had more conspicuous consumption than non-attending college students. Education mediated the relationship between self-esteem and fashion innovativeness as well as the relationship between self-esteem and conspicuous consumption. Finally, fashion innovativeness was positively associated with conspicuous consumption. College students with low levels of fashion innovativeness tend to possess the individual trait of conspicuous consumption.

Conclusions. Based on the results, self-esteem derived from the Chinese culture values and the education of cram style are important factors to influence individual trait of fashion innovativeness and conspicuous consumption in their young adulthood. Students, who have less family income, have a lower self-esteem and are less likely to attend college, but have a higher level of fashion innovativeness tendency and lower level of conspicuous consumption. Thus, the results suggest marketers may focus on these young adults not studying in a university to promote new or small brands and defuse new products. Marketers should create extensive marketing to promote uniqueness from products mix (product, promotion, place, and price) and attract those consumers to develop a positive attitude to adopt new products and defuse new product information. Students, who have more family income, have a higher self-esteem are more likely to go to college, but have a lower level of fashion innovativeness tendency and have a higher level of conspicuous consumption. In other words, they tend to be fashion followers and have higher brand consciousness. The results suggest marketers should increase advertisements and/or public relations campaigns to create a well-known brand reputation. Furthermore, marketers may introduce well-known brands and products around university towns for Chinese students.

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